

Inspection of a good school: Oak Meadow Primary School

Ryan Avenue, Ashmore Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV11 2QQ

Inspection dates:

26–27 February 2020

Outcome

Oak Meadow Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Oak Meadow wants every child to aim high. Children do very well academically but also learn so much about being a good person and life skills. We couldn't want for more.' This parent's comment is typical.

This is a happy, caring school. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Staff work together to encourage aspirational thinking, kindness and hard work. This shines through every aspect of school life. Pupils know that teachers believe in them and want them to succeed. They behave well. They take pride in their work and school.

The school's core value of 'empathy' is at the heart of everything. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of community and equality. Pupils feel safe and secure. They value friendship. They support and care for each other. This means that bullying is rare. Pupils are especially proud of the school's recent Anti-Bullying Charter Mark.

Special curriculum events and exhibitions are a unique feature of the school. For example, pupils, parents and carers love the arts and culture weeks. Pupils gain inspiration from listening to many visitors who attend these events. The school recently gained national recognition for the outstanding difference this work makes to the children and the community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have put an ambitious and broad curriculum in place. Learning about the topics excites pupils. Staff feel valued. A love of learning is very evident around school.

Leaders place great importance on reading. Children soon settle into Reception classes. Relationships are warm and trusting. Nursery rhymes and stories are part of every day. Children love joining in with favourite books, such as 'Jack and The Flumflum Tree'. This helps them to develop strong language and communication skills.

A well-organised phonics programme starts as soon as children join the school. Early reading books are well matched to the sounds and letters that pupils know. Teachers are well trained and skilful. They use assessment information well to build on what children know. Teachers identify children who find reading more difficult. The weakest readers have extra help to practise their sounds more often. Leaders keep a close eye on making sure that this is helping them to catch up.

On top of this, a love of reading is palpable. Pupils care for the well-used library. Teachers read stories and poetry aloud in daily sessions. This brings language to life. Pupils talk about inspirational poets, such as Benjamin Zephaniah and Lemn Sissay. Class books are chosen carefully so that pupils hear about and discuss moral issues, such as the refugee crisis. This supports pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well prepared for the next step in their education. Very many pupils achieve high standards in reading.

Subject leaders have identified the key knowledge and skills that they want pupils to have mastered and by when. Geography and history are particularly strong examples. Leaders have set clear expectations for all year groups. Planning follows a logical order, from early years to Year 6. Assessment systems are easy and useful for teachers. They help teachers to check that pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding and are ready to tackle more challenging content.

During the inspection, Year 1 pupils were studying aerial photographs and plans of the local area. They recognised familiar places in the neighbourhood. They plotted landmarks that they knew, such as shops and social places. This inspired their curiosity to learn more. Pupils in Year 6 were using geographical knowledge and skills to find out why castles are located in particular areas. One pupil said: 'We already know about four-figure grid references. That helps us to use these six-figure grid references accurately.' Pupils make strong progress and enjoy geography.

Pupils get the same good deal in other subjects. For example, pupils develop a secure understanding of history. Year 5 pupils explained the chronology of the Roman Empire to me, correctly using terms such as 'AD' and 'BC'. They used their knowledge to identify events on a timeline, such as the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. They explained that Pliny's letters are an important historical source.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in the curriculum. Staff are well trained and help pupils to overcome any barriers that they might have.

The mathematics curriculum is not as strong as the curriculum in other subjects. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. However, teachers' checks on how well pupils are doing in mathematics vary from one class to another. As a result, some pupils move through the school with gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. This is not consistently addressed, particularly in lower key stage 2. This hinders some pupils' progress and confidence in mathematics. The opportunities for pupils to practise and recall basic mathematical facts vary from one class to another. This hinders pupils' mental fluency.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's approach to keeping pupils safe starts with the school's caring ethos. A governor captured this well, saying, 'This is the Oak Meadow Family. The safety of the child comes first.'

A team, including a family liaison officer and a governor, shares responsibility for safeguarding. This team has the full trust of parents and pupils. Members are highly skilled and work very well with external agencies and the local community. Governors are diligent. They make sure that all procedures are followed and the school site is safe.

The curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to stay safe in all aspects of life.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced across the school. However, leaders do not keep a close enough eye on how well the curriculum and assessment system are implemented. Some pupils are moving through the curriculum with gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. These gaps are left unaddressed for too long. This means that some pupils are not able to tackle new subject content with confidence. Leaders should provide support and guidance for staff so that they use the curriculum more flexibly and respond to pupils' learning needs. This will improve pupils' progress in mathematics.
- The subject leader has taken actions to improve pupils' mathematical fluency across the school. For example, some classes have regular 'times tables rock star' sessions. This is helping pupils' rapid recall of basic number calculations. However, practice varies from class to class. This does not assist smooth progress across the school. To improve this, leaders should keep a close eye on improving pupils' mathematical fluency in all classes.

Background

When we have judged to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 28 July 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104341 |
| Local authority | Wolverhampton |
| Inspection number | 10122603 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 423 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Martin Hindley |
| Headteacher | Simon Arnold |
| Website | www.oakmeadowschool.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2016.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2017. A further senior teacher was appointed in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, other leaders within the school and all teaching and non-teaching staff. I met with the chair of the local governing body and five other governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority.
- In order to judge the quality of education, I focused on reading, mathematics and geography. In each subject, inspection activities included discussions with the subject leader, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, a review of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- I listened to eight pupils read and talked to them about their reading. I also spoke to groups of key stage 2 pupils about their reading.

- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. I spoke formally with two groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- I met with leaders to discuss the school's safeguarding procedures. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment. I checked safeguarding policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I spoke to pupils and staff about how safe pupils are at school.
- I reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website.
- I took into consideration the 43 responses to Parent View, including 43 free-text responses. I spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- I studied the school's website and the published information about the school.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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